



Village of Oak Park

123 Madison Street
Oak Park, Illinois 60302
www.oak-park.us

Meeting Minutes

President and Board of Trustees

Tuesday, June 18, 2024

7:15 PM

Village Hall

I. Call to Order

President Pro-Tem and Village Trustee Susan Buchanan called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:18 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Junior Deputy Clerk Hope Enyia called the roll. Village Clerk Christina Waters introduced Junior Deputy Clerk Enyia and presented her with a certificate for her civic engagement.

Village President Vicki Scaman joined the meeting via remote participation per Village policy.

Present: 7 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Straw, and Village Trustee Wesley

Absent: 0

III. Agenda Approval

Item D was moved from Consent Agenda to Regular Agenda.

It was moved by Trustee Straw, seconded by Trustee Robinson, to approve the Agenda as amended. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.

VI. Proclamation

A. [MOT 24-187](#) A Motion to Approve a Proclamation in Memoriam of Harriette Gillem Robinet

President Pro-Tem Buchanan read the Proclamation into the record and presented a framed copy to Mac Robinet.

It was moved by Trustee Wesley, seconded Village Trustee Straw, that this Motion be approved. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.

V. Non-Agenda Public Comment

David Pope, President of Oak Park Residence Corporation: The collection of data related to diversity is important and needs to be self-reported. Encouraged continued support for the Oak Park Regional Housing Center (OPRHC).

VII. Village Manager Reports

B. [ID 24-293](#) **A Report Regarding Community High-Speed Internet Access for Multifamily Residential Households**

IT Director Alvin Nepomuceno presented the Item. Civic Information System Commission (CISC) Chair David Baker provided additional information.

President Scaman inquired about the providers. Chair Baker said Comcast and AT&T are the incumbent providers and there should be two hard-wired fiber connections to every structure in the building to give residents choice.

Trustee Parakkat noted that he ran on affordable internet as a platform and introduced it to the Board goals.

Trustee Robinson said she is interested in the possibility of a requirement by ordinance or what an incentive program would look like. She wondered if the Board could get guidance on how to consider this requirement against different types of units. Chair Baker said replacing the cat 5 infrastructure with fiber is very costly to landlords so perhaps there is a way to incentivize it. Landlords could advertise it to attract renters. Director Nepomuceno said it is empowering the potential tenant with information so landlords will be more competitive.

Trustee Enyia said he used to work for AT&T and pushed fiber for this reason. There are opportunities to work with area reps and discounts through government partnerships. There are also congressional dollars and a technical assistance program for this area for \$20M.

Trustee Straw said he supports the hardwire connections rather than just the 5G and we should provide education around opportunities for high-speed internet for low-income residents. High-speed internet is particularly important for families with school-aged children and creating a partnership around sharing that data would be a net win.

VIII. Village Board Committees

There were no comments.

IX. Citizen Commission Vacancies

C. [ID 24-337](#) **Board & Commission Vacancy Report for June 18, 2024**

There were no comments.

XI. Consent Agenda

Approval of the Consent Agenda

It was moved y Trustee Wesley, seconded by Trustee Straw, to approve the items under the Consent Agenda. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 7 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Straw, and Village Trustee Wesley

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0

- E.** [RES 24-232](#) **A Resolution Approving an Amendment to the Professional Services Agreement with Walker Consultants, Inc. to Increase the Not-To-Exceed Amount from \$163,700.00 to \$171,700.00 to Provide for a Limited Slab Post-Tensioned Evaluation of the Village’s Avenue Parking Garage and Authorizing its Execution**

This Resolution was approved.
- F.** [RES 24-233](#) **A Resolution Approving a Second Amendment to the Independent Contractor Agreement with J. Gill & Co. for Maintenance Repairs of the Village’s Holley Court, The Avenue, and Oak Park River Forest High School Parking Structures to Increase the Not-To-Exceed Amount from \$1,649,025.00 to \$1,671,175.00 and Authorizing Its Execution**

This Resolution was adopted.
- G.** [RES 24-234](#) **A Resolution Approving an Independent Contractor Agreement with Oak Brook Mechanical Services, Inc. to Install New Mechanical Equipment and Building Envelope Improvements at the North Fire Station in an Amount Not to Exceed \$172,462.50 and Authorizing its Execution**

This Resolution was adopted.
- H.** [RES 24-235](#) **A Resolution Authorizing the Purchase of One 2024 John Deere C317G Compact Loader from West Side Tractor Sales of Lisle, Illinois, through the Sourcewell Joint Purchasing Program in an Amount Not to Exceed \$64,903.83 and Waiving the Village’s Bid Process for the Purchase**

This Resolution was adopted.
- I.** [RES 24-236](#) **A Resolution Approving Executive Session Minutes and Authorizing the Release of Certain Executive Session Minutes**

This Resolution was adopted.
- J.** [RES 24-237](#) **A Resolution Authorizing the Submission of a Grant Application with the**

Illinois Emergency Management Agency and Office of Homeland Security
for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program with a Requested Funding
Amount of \$345,000

This Resolution was adopted.

- K. [ORD 24-123](#) An Ordinance Amending Chapter 2 (“Administration”), Article 4 (“Village Manager”), Section 2-4-13 (“Contracts and Settlements”) and Article 6 (“Finance Department”), Section 2-6-10 (“All Contracts for Supplies, Equipment, Repair Work or the Making of Any Public Improvement; Requirements for Approval and Bidding”) of the Oak Park Village Code.

This Ordinance was adopted.

- L. [ORD 24-124](#) An Ordinance Amending Chapter 15 (“Motor Vehicles and Traffic”), Article 3 (“Parking Meters, Parking Permits, and Municipal Attendant Parking Lots”), Section 15-3-18 (“Parking Rates; Parking Meters, Pay by Space Machines, Village Operated Parking Structures, Permit, Extended Pass, Valet and Daytime on Street Permit Parking”) and Article 4 (“Vehicle Licenses”) of the Oak Park Village Code to Update the Reduced Parking Permit Fee Program to Assist the Village’s Unhoused Residents

This Ordinance was adopted.

- M. [ORD 24-129](#) Concur with the Zoning Board of Appeals’ Recommendation and Adopt an Ordinance Granting a Special Use Permit to Construct Townhouses in the MS - Madison Street Zoning District at 427 Madison Street

This Ordinance was adopted.

XII. Regular Agenda

- D. [RES 24-217](#) A Resolution Approving Program Year (PY) 2024 Funding Recommendations and Releasing the Draft PY 2024 Action Plan for Public Comment

Trustee Wesley recused himself from the Item due to being on the board of directors of one of the nonprofits.

It was moved by Trustee Robinson, seconded by Trustee Enyia, that this Resolution be adopted. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 6 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, and Village Trustee Straw

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0

RECUSED: 1 - Village Trustee Wesley

- N. [RES 24-242](#) A Resolution Approving the Renewal of a Professional Services Agreement

with Metro Strategies Group, LLC to Provide Grant Services in an Amount Not to Exceed \$100,000 for a One (1) Year Term and Authorizing its Execution

Grants Manager Vanessa Matheny introduced the Item. Metro Strategies Principal Seema Wadia provided a presentation and update.

Trustee Parakkat inquired what is included in the \$3.5M. Principal Wadia said eight are represented and seven are in progress. The historical records digitization project grant request for \$5K was denied. Manager Jackson said we will be in a better position next year to evaluate that metric.

Trustee Parakkat asked if the proposals beyond the \$3.5M also went through this process. Principal Wadia said it depends what the departments need and whether education and guidance is needed from Metro Strategies. He said he will be a yes vote.

Trustee Straw inquired if this is enough capacity. Manager Matheny said Metro Strategies has billed half of their current allocation so far and the Village thinks the additional \$100K would help move forward for the next year and provide a safety net. Principal Wadia said we want to be cognizant of the capacity to implement a grant. He said he is a yes vote.

Trustee Wesley said he supports any kind of grant-writing expertise provided we get a return on investment (ROI) from it. He requested quarterly reporting so we can see our ROI on an ongoing basis, which Manager Jackson confirmed. Trustee Wesley said then he would be a yes.

President Pro-Tem Buchanan noted the metrics of success depend on the funding rate of the individual programs.

It was moved by Trustee Straw, seconded by Trustee Robinson, that this Resolution be adopted. The motion was approved. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 7 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Enyia, Village Trustee Parakkat, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Straw, and Village Trustee Wesley

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0

O. [ID 24-326](#) A Presentation Concerning the Corrective Action Response of the Oak Park Regional Housing Center

Manager Jackson introduced the Item.

Ralph Lee: Is it our policy that governmental accusations or implications of

incompetence and criminality be allowed to be placed in a public record before a complete investigation has taken place.

Paul Sakol: If the housing center were to close, renters and small landlords would suffer and their staff expertise would be lost. The Village Board must ensure they have an independent audit of the housing center.

Daniel Lauber: City planner and fair housing attorney. Closing this housing center will lead to the formation of racial enclaves and it will become a segregated city like Evanston.

Michael Habert: OPRHC board member. We need the collaboration and the confidence of the Village Board and staff to help us work together to ensure a structure of operation that can do its designed purpose.

Rob Breymaier: Asked the Village Board to ensure that this dispute between the staff of the two organizations is resolved and the Live in Oak Park program can continue.

Molly Frank Stewart on behalf of OPRHC employee Sharon Echhoff: Integration requires continual cultivation. We must live in proximity. Affirmative moves need to be valued for quality, not quantity.

Michael Stewart: Longtime employee of OPRHC. It's important for all new Village staff to learn and understand our rich history so we can work together towards integration, inclusion, and equity.

Rohini D'Silva: Hopes the Village and OPRHC can work collaboratively to address outstanding issues and rebuild their relationship.

Miguel Escobedo: The housing center helped them to move forward with their first building. It is inconceivable that you would walk away from that. They are a tremendous asset to the community.

Eva Spinks read on behalf of LaVerne Collins: Owner of multi-family properties has relied on the OPRHC to provide referrals, tours, and excellent counseling to rental clients.

Jane Zawadewdei: OPRHC has been very supportive to her for eight years. She has become a good landlord with their support. This work takes one-on-one relationships.

Eva Spinks: The housing center made it possible for them to move to Oak Park. She would hate to see this program become a victim to what's happening all over.

Development Services Budget & Revenue Analyst Noemy Diaz presented the Item. OPRHC Executive Director Athena Williams provided a statement and additional information.

President Scaman said she prepared for this evening with empathy. Accusations that our staff have been anything but professional or fair is uncalled for. She volunteered to meet with Director Williams two years ago to help prepare invoices that were behind and her time was wasted. This Village Board has made commitments to housing that haven't been seen in many years. She addressed some of the public commenters directly and said this is a wasted beginning to this discussion. If we do not submit the reporting properly, we do not get paid. The work of OPRHC is very important and the corrective action is way overdue.

Trustee Straw said he's a big supporter of the mission of OPRHC, all of the data we have seen is concerning, and he doesn't know how we move forward from here. He said he wants us to fund an intentional effort to keep and further Oak Park's integration.

Trustee Robinson said the comments impugning the integrity of staff were wholly inappropriate. She said she hasn't worked with a group of people with a higher level of integrity led by a Village Manager with a higher level of integrity and a willingness to work tirelessly on this issue. She said the three separate reviews by the Village, KPW, and HUD arrive at the same conclusion that there are serious financial challenges being faced by OPRHC right now. What ranks highest to her is the nonpayment to staff. It requires a response of accountability and a very clearly detailed plan of corrective action to ensure this will never happen again. She said she is very worried about the future of our relationship. She said the closest she lands is Alternative #1 to continue to pause the funding and for OPRHC to do a self-assessment.

It was moved by Trustee Robinson, seconded by Trustee Wesley, to extend the meeting past 10:00 P.M. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.

Director Williams said OPRHC was allocated \$50K to hire a development director. Instead they hired a strategic initiatives director to function as a grants manager and fundraiser. Village staff were made aware of that and they have the documentation to show that.

Trustee Wesley said that he fully supports our Village staff and their integrity and any attack on that is wholly unnecessary and inappropriate and it won't be tolerated at this Board table. He said his issues are with the program and he doesn't believe in the mission of integration based on Ridgeland and Garfield. He said he doesn't understand how we can make

affirmative moves if we don't have housing to move folks to. He said he needs to see a modern take on integration to continue to provide funding for it. In order to have integrated neighborhoods, we need diverse housing types across all neighborhoods, which we do not currently have.

Trustee Parakkat said he would like to come to staff's defense and he truly admires how they have helped us navigate this. He said it is a difficult choice on one side with the impact, history, and his own personal sentiments around OPRHC and on the other side it is the fiduciary responsibility as an elected official. He said it is going to be irresponsible to invest based on the information available to him. He said he would like to see the pause with the HUD reinstatement, financial audit and oversight, and some alignment to future relevance. He said he is not sure the current financial situation is tenable for that period. Director Williams said it will be for the Live in Oak Park program.

Trustee Enyia agreed with his colleagues and said we want to live in a community that is intentionally pushing integration. The best way we achieve that is to continue to listen to our Village staff and understand our options.

Trustee Buchanan requested clarification about the Village having to return the funds if OPRHC is not recognized as a HUD-approved agency. The Live in Oak Park program has nothing to do with HUD's probation, which is the other program. Analyst Diaz said the HUD inactivation status was as a result of the West Cook home ownership program. However, as a result to that, HUD is reviewing the entire organization's operations. The Village's contractual language states that any and all agencies must be in good standing with HUD guidelines. If we were to fund the organization any CDBG dollars during their probation, and that certification is revoked, we would be liable to repay any dollars given to the organization during that inactive period, even though it is a separate program.

President Pro-Tem Buchanan noted all other CDBG recipients are able to comply with the deadlines. She wondered why OPRHC should be getting special treatment over the years and why they cannot meet their reporting deadlines. Director Williams said they had one period in 2020 where they were late and they were fined by the Village. President Pro-Tem Buchanan noted 17 other instances of them being late. Director Williams asked her to share that information with them. President Pro-Tem Buchanan said it is illustrative of this quagmire which leaves us in a difficult position and our minds are blown by this financial disaster. She said she doesn't know what the alternative is and the majority seems in favor of Alternative #1 to continue to not fund OPRHC which is illustrative of how unacceptable this financial quagmire is.

President Scaman said we are together in that we believe integration requires intentionality. OPRHC has been a valued partner and champion of our historical success but has not risen to the occasion. We would prefer to not be in this position. We did nothing to create this challenge and we have done nothing but try to help. The accountability is on OPRHC for what could be the loss of a 50+ year relationship we all value. You are disappointing your staff and this community. She suggested members of the community volunteer for OPRHC before they criticize the Village Board. She said it sounds like the Village Board does not feel confident in un-pausing the funding at this time. She said she is devastated that this is the inevitable reality and said she would entertain ongoing dialogue as we move forward with our housing study in the hopes that the result is a re-imagining of a partnership with the Village.

Manager Jackson said over the last year and a half, we have reorganized the Village, completed a housing study and strategic plan, begun a racial equity study and action plan. We continue to invite OPRHC to participate in what implementation looks like with those initiatives. We stood up a Neighborhood Services department to focus and provide strength and leadership on housing and trying to modernize racial integration. We look forward to continuing to emphasize partnerships and leadership in that area. We also stood up a DEI office that stands ready to continue working with OPRHC to resolve these issues and find a collaborative way to move the Village forward on racial integration into the future.

OPRHC Associate Director Michael Stewart thanked the Village Board and staff and was hopeful to still work together and find a path forward.

P. [ID 24-306](#) A Presentation on Emergency Overnight Shelter in Oak Park

Manager Jackson said this Item could be tabled and rescheduled for July 9. The Item was tabled.

Q. [MOT 24-188](#) A Motion to Delay the Implementation of the Fall Leaf Collection Program Transition to the Bagging Model from 2024 to 2025 and Directing Staff to Prepare the Necessary Ordinance and Any Related Documents

Trustee Enyia said the impetus behind the motion is to understand how this program is going to impact seniors, disabled, and residents who are not used to taking on this extra work that would be required. We want to start this program on the right foot with communication and education and give ample time for this process.

Trustee Parakkat said he voted no the last time and his concerns still remain about equity for the older population, the challenge from a cost perspective, and the cons to sustainability. He said he would prefer to put it

on referendum and get the community at large to express their opinion in full. The next best option is to delay.

Trustee Wesley said he is one million percent against a referendum for leaves. He thinks it should be the decision of this Board and not the community telling us what we can do with our leaves. We have spent too much time talking about leaves. Let's make the decision and deal with the consequences. He said he will keep his vote consistent and vote for this program for the fall. Trustee Parakkat noted he would not have spent any time on leaves if it was not on the agenda.

Public Works Director Rob Sproule presented a program update. Chief Communications Officer Dan Yopchick presented a communications update.

Trustee Parakkat inquired about the costs for the three options of status quo, historical bagging, or making it cost neutral for residents. Director Sproule said the Village will not know the potential costs until we're further into the process.

Trustee Wesley asked if the Village has identified the seniors in the community. Director Sproule said the program messaging is going out in multiple ways. The Village can try to target them more specifically and plans to re-engage with the Aging in Communities and Disability Access commissions. The Village can reach out to the 50 residents who utilize the sidewalk shoveling program. Trustee Wesley suggested door hangers. CCO Yopchick added that the Village is working with the Township and senior services group.

Trustee Wesley inquired about providing compost bins as an alternative to bags. Director Sproule said the Village can talk to LRS but he does not know that they have enough quantity of compost containers. Based on historical average data, the Village is estimating 146,000 bags for the year (24,000 bags per week for six weeks), which averages to two bags per household. Each bag can hold up to 50 pounds of leaves. Residents can put leaves in any rigid container (extra trash can) for curbside pick-up.

Trustee Straw asked what will happen if residents are not compliant. Director Sproule said Village staff will be trained and provided with supplies and active engage with residents. It is about being educational and seeking compliance. Code enforcement officers will follow up at a later date if there isn't compliance over a period of time. He said eventually the leaves would get picked up by the Village in some manner to be determined. Trustee Straw said he does not support the motion.

President Scaman said her vote to delay is a no. She said she fully trusts staff's ability to put out a solid campaign and implement the program though she is disappointed that we are not doing this with all of the education out there before the vote. She said she does not support the major draw on staff time to do the program ourselves if LRS is not able to accommodate.

Trustee Buchanan said it is important to emphasize with the marketing that the goal is leaving the leaves and having less need for bags. She implored residents to change their lawn paradigm. Your green lawn is a biologic dead zone and part of this movement is to change that so that our lawns and ecosystem are welcoming.

Manager Jackson requested direction on the rebate program.

Trustee Straw said he would not support a flat rebate and would rather the Village invest the money in reducing the burden on individuals who would be most burdened by the program.

Trustee Parakkat inquired about the rebate costs. Director Sproule said 6-month financial assistance would equate to \$14.52 per household for 29 bags, which would cost the Village \$162K. A full-year rebate is \$29 per resident for 58 bags, which would cost the Village \$325K. They would come out of the environmental services enterprise fund balance. Trustee Parakkat said he is not comfortable going with a rebate program that is not fully structured at this point.

Trustee Robinson said she is willing to do the annual rebate across the Village. Trustee Buchanan agreed if that's what it takes to get people to care for their lawns. Trustees Wesley and Enyia said they would also support the rebate. President Scaman said she is good with the rebate.

It was moved by Village Trustee Enyia, seconded by Village Trustee Parakkat, that this Motion be approved. The motion failed. The roll call on the vote was as follows:

AYES: 3 - Village President Scaman, Village Trustee Enyia, and Village Trustee Parakkat

NAYS: 4 - Village Trustee Buchanan, Village Trustee Robinson, Village Trustee Straw, and Village Trustee Wesley

ABSENT: 0

XIII. Call to Board and Clerk

Clerk Waters wished the community a happy Juneteenth.

Trustee Enyia thanked Clerk Waters for having his daughter as the junior deputy clerk. He thanked the DEI office and Dr. Walker, Jeffrey Hines,

Chris Thomas, and the rest of the Juneteenth Committee.

Trustee Wesley said we are not teaching the rich black history of Oak Park. He motioned for the Village to work with D97, D200, and OPRF Historical Society to create a curriculum that elevates the Oak Park black history and have it taught in our schools. Trustee Enyia seconded the motion.

Trustee Straw acknowledged staff for an incredible Juneteenth event and highlighted the Oak Park Pride Party from 11 am to 2 pm on Saturday on the Village Hall's South Lawn.

Trustee Parakkat said he has enjoyed the Juneteenth programming so far and he wished everyone who celebrates a happy Eid Mubarak.

President Scaman said she is currently in Toronto for an Equitable Development Data Insight Training (EDIT) symposium, sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for C4. The topics are affordable housing, tree canopy programs, equitable economic development, food access and equity, bike walk safety, transit equity and public transportation, downtown revitalization, addressing root causes of gun violence, and the C4 topic is green landscape technology.

XIV. Adjourn

It was moved by Trustee Straw, seconded by Trustee Wesley, to Adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 11:48 P.M., Tuesday, June 18, 2024.

**Respectfully submitted,
Deputy Clerk Hansen**